



DEVELOPMENT & IMPLEMENTATION GROUP (DIG) MEETING AGENDA

**Vocational Rehabilitation Field Office
3901 N 27th, Conf Rm A
Lincoln, NE**

**Wednesday, 2/16/11, 10 a.m. — 5 p.m.
Thursday, 2/17/11, 8:30 a.m. — 12 noon**

1. Review of ARRA & Demonstration Projects

Mark

(List of ARRA Funded Projects at end of minutes)

Funding for all ARRA projects ends 9/30/2011. The money must be spent by 9/30/2011.

Services to Individuals with Mental Illness: we increased the number of outcomes to our MH agreements, once ARRA funding ends they will return to original outcome numbers.

ABI projects: We haven't seen the number of outcomes that we had hoped. We learned what is needed in the community, i.e. supports that are needed and this information can be used when working with the legislature. The current funding of these projects as grants will not continue after 9/30. We would consider a fee for service agreement if we feel there is a need for the service these projects could provide and they could provide it for a reasonable fee.

Transportation System for Omaha Tribe: one time purchase that has been successful.

Project Search: We were successful in getting funding from the Medicaid Infrastructure grant. We have made commitments for the first 2 years and the 3rd year funded by a fee for service model. Who the fee for service would be paid to will be determined by each project.

Autism Center: This project has been fairly successful, we'd consider continuing through a fee for service agreement.

Training Programs: These programs are operating successfully.

Self Employment Opportunities: The Abilities Fund continues to operate successfully.

GED Instruction: This program is ongoing.

Job Coaching & Supported Employment: Apogee has not used all the funds that were part of their agreement.

Unexpended projects: Career Solutions – \$76,000; Employment Works \$135,000, Apogee \$33,000; Goodwill ABI 110,000. We will look at phasing out these projects and spending the money somewhere else as the money must be spent by 9/30/2011.

2. Workforce

Don

Joan Modrell says that their physical locations will be going away as most of their business will be done on-line. The application that is used by Workforce asks the individual if they have a disability, however that information just goes into their database and not shared with the One-Stops.

They will post on their system (Nebraska Works) a VR contact, phone number and email for each office location. Joan is going to contact the company that they purchased their electronic application program from to see if when an individual indicates they have a disability that they are prompted to contact Nebraska VR. Their system can generate emails to applicants which could be used to give them information about VR. They also have a "BLAST" system that gets emails out to all their staff that we could use when we have job fairs.

Staff report that consumers have had problems using Workforce's on-line system and come to us for help in completing the on-line applications.

The on-line system has really reduced the number of referrals we are seeing from Workforce.

3. Director Update

Mark

Mark and the Marketing Committee have been working on "Branding VR" with a target date to kick off a new Branding initiative October 1.

Mark has talked with a consultant about our image. His question to Mark is what has changed? If we put a message out there then we have to be able to deliver. We have to have things in place before we start advertising a new image. He told Mark what he sees VR as is Problem Solvers. If we say we are problem solvers then we have to be able to address their issues, we have to really know community resources. The first question we have to ask potential consumers is "Are you Ready?" and if the answer is no, we need to be able to get them in touch with the resources to resolve their issues and then come back to us when they are ready. Second question we follow up with is "Are you committed?" That means staff have to buy into it and change how they operate. We have lots of work to do before we promote a new message.

Budget (Federal): House side would eliminate funding for In-Service, Supported Employment, Migrant Farm Works and Projects with Industry programs. The President's budget also eliminated those programs but put the money for these projects into the 110 Budget for states to either use the money for those original programs or however they see fit.

Budget (State): flat funded VR for the 1st year with a slight increase in the 2nd year of the budget. This is good news as we had heard the governor would reduce our budget by \$354,000. This will allow us to match our federal dollars.

Met with the Commissioner about the hiring freeze. We haven't heard yet when we will be able to hire new staff.

Video conference system: Teams should consider having a person on each team do all the video conferencing scheduling. We are also looking at how Meeting Maker works with scheduling the equipment and hope to make changes when we can.

Data Center Changes: Dan is no longer the supervisor the IT staff. Mark will come out with the plan of who to contact for what and when sometime next month.

The State Rehab Council is having their legislative lunch next week.

Technology Update:

- Testing on case management: July 1
- Deploy QUEST 2 system: Oct 1
- Upgrading operating system to Snow Leopard: start installation in June to be operational July 1
- Snow Leopard will allow us to use Mail again; in anticipation of more staff using iPads we will also be moving to iWork, which is the suite of software comparable to Microsoft office. iWork includes Pages (like Word), Numbers (like Excel), Keynote (like PowerPoint). These programs are all compatible with Word, Excel, and PowerPoint.
- Eventually we will be moving from Meeting Maker to iCal, probably not until October 1 or after.
- iPad – will be focusing on Placement and Transition staff or staff in remote locations (July-Sept) to begin with. We are waiting for the new version of iPad to be released before we begin purchasing, deploying and training staff. For staff receiving an iPad it will replace their laptop but they will still have a desktop computer. Eval staff won't be losing their laptops.

Team Evaluations: During the team tour Mark and Margy will be talking with the teams about their team evaluation results and doing some follow up with them.

Fed Ex days: From the book Drive by Dan Pink. We would designate an afternoon, say Thursday afternoon where all staff on a team could work on any issue they wanted to. Each team as a team would decide what issue they want to work on and the next morning they present their solution to the other teams using the videoconferencing equipment. Does staff get to opt out? If they are part of the team they would participate. What about someone answering the phones and greeting consumers? We could have an SOS person, or other temp person do that. OD's can talk to staff about this but Mark will set it up, we will all do it the same afternoon and present the next morning to each other using the Videoconferencing equipment.

4. Post Secondary Work Group Recommendations

Janet, Jack, Larry

The committee heard from the Financial Aid people that students need to get their FASFA information into the Financial Aid offices by April 1 at the latest, earlier is always better.

Discussed the Financial Aid Budget Information that Janet gathered from the Financial Aid offices. Originally the question centered around Transportation, do schools figure it in the budget? The document identifies which schools figure transportation into the budget and some schools will also increase the budget for extra transportation. This form will be posted on VRIS.

Post secondary justification form – to be used with new staff on probation. Central Area has been using it with all staff.

Shared the drop out rates that the teams tracked. When comparing the general population drop out rate we determined that we don't have a problem.

6. Case Transfer (report from the counselor committee)

Don

The crux of the transfer issue is credit. Another issue is the money. The Counselor Committee came up with ideas for sharing credit but decided none of them were feasible. Their final recommendation is to identify a judge. The sending team would contact the receiving team and if no problem in transferring the case, fine but if there is an issue the case would be sent to the “judge”. It was decided that we will not use a “judge” at this time.

For QUEST 2 – we are considering opening up statewide access to all cases except the cases where a staff person is a consumer or a family member of a staff member is a consumer.

A Program Manual chapter has been written about case transfer and the responsibilities of the sending team, the receiving team and the consumer in making contact before and during the transfer. The consumer will make contact with the receiving team before the transfer is accepted. At this time no other changes will be made regarding case transfer.

7. Online Training Rules & Guidelines

Margy

A VR staff person requested permission to take an online class during work time that was not work related. Approval to take a class during work time would only be granted if the agency requested a staff person to take a particular class. Staff cannot use their lunch hour or break times to take a class that is not approved by VR, they cannot stay after work and use VR equipment to take a class, they cannot bring their own computer to work and use it during lunch or after work to participate in the on-line class. Staff would have to take the class on their own time away from the office using their own equipment. The Department had wanted to get this rule into the NAPE agreement but because of the Governor’s budget issues not much of anything but salaries was addressed in the NAPE agreement.

Cheryl distributed a monthly video sign up sheet to be used by staff beginning with the March 7 training.

It was suggested that Meeting Maker calendars be made available to everyone statewide. We will check with Laura/Tibor about the possibility of this. Update: in checking with Laura and Tibor they shared that it’s not possible to give everyone proxy to each other’s calendar at the Administrator level of Meeting Maker. Each staff person would have to give everyone proxy on their own calendar.

8. Endeavor Project

Pat

Purpose is to improve access to the Internet for individuals who are deaf and/or hard of hearing. They would receive a notebook computer and access to broadband Internet for a cost of \$230 a year. They have to have hearing loss that matches our criteria and VR is one of the programs that the consumer must work with in order to qualify. If it’s appropriate for our consumers in their job or job search we could pay the \$230 for the first year. But after the first year the broadband access is the responsibility of the individual and we would need to work with the consumer on how they would continue to pay for the Internet access after the first year. Project Endeavor will provide technical support to the individual during those 2 years. It went into effect mid January.

9. Roles and Responsibilities

Mark

Mark developed charts based on the information that the team evaluations revealed as well as what the Office Directors reported they spent on Operations, Community Partnerships, Individualized Services and Team Approach. There is quite a wide variance between OD's on where they spend their time. Mark and Margy will be addressing these issues with each of the OD's when they do their quarterly individual meetings.

Program Directors:

As individual Program Directors retire we won't be replacing them. We want to look at the areas we currently have PD's to determine if the areas we are focusing on are the ones we need to continue to focus on, or do we need to shift people to different areas and this will give us the flexibility to do this. PD's will still assist the OD's in training staff but the OD's need to identify the training they wish the PD's to do. View the PD's a SWAT team. Bring the issues that confront the agency to the PD's for them to address. It's the responsibility of the OD's and their teams to bring the areas that they are facing to the forefront to be addressed. This way PD's will prioritize their time on problem solving, whom are we serving around a certain issue, deficit in trainings, etc. We will be looking at what other states are doing that we could be doing, possibly more research. With QUEST 2 we will be able to get better reports to determine areas we need to address.

Office Directors

Majority of the OD's time needs to be spent working with their teams, day to day case management. The VR Leadership Council was very adamant that their OD needs to be more involved in what they do, would even like them to job shadow them to see how they perform their job, OD's must be actively involved in the day to day operation of the team. It is critical for the OD's to be on board with agency policy and direction. We aren't in a position to have as many community partnerships that we have had previously, but what is necessary is community resources and knowing what those resources are. The OD's will be responsible for identifying who on the team will be responsible for being the community resource individual. OD's will work with the teams on coaching, case reviews and managing the teams performance; pulling in PD's when necessary. As a result will be able to identify case issues that OD's see as they will be more involved with the cases in reviews and with staff which will be brought to the program directors to see how to address statewide.

Don is working on developing case review documents for the OD's to use.

QUEST 2: We will develop checklists around the VR Process that will define what must be done and what the decision points are. We will eventually make these checklists part of QUEST 2, they won't be integrated when we deploy in October however. The direction we are heading is electronic, for task notes especially. Some information will be in the hard copy file, medical information we receive for instance but most everything else will be electronic.

Tim and Cheryl will be talking with each of the OD's on the types of reports that will help them manage their teams for QUEST 2.

Currently we don't have standards around individual performance, no decision made on whether we will develop standards and if we do then how we'd measure them will also have to be developed.

Areas that the Program Directors are currently working on or on the table for them to address:

- Developing work groups around areas that come up that the agency is facing or around processes we are considering changing.
- Autism – assessment tools and more training

- Case review tools – Don already working on these
- Case note guide (task notes)
- How to measure success, by team, by individual, what constitutes substantial services
- How to serve consumers with ABI
- How do we engage individuals with Personality Disorders in order to be successful, include MH, we are seeing MH that are much more severe
- DD Eligibility and supported employment; where a consumer needs SE but not eligible for DD
- Current information on what other agencies can and can't do. It can change pretty quickly however Shari Bahensky sits on a committee of agencies so she is up-to-date on changes and keeps the Hotline updated. But we need to work with Shari to see how better to publicize this information

10. CAP Report:

Vicki

Because Vicki wasn't able to attend, OD's can call Vicki if they have any questions about the CAP report that was sent out with the agenda.

11. Employee Reasonable Accommodations/Client Services

Pat and King

As an employer we have the responsibility to provide reasonable accommodations. Sometimes it may be more and the employee may need to apply for services. Dennis and Pat are working on guidance for the OD's on how to handle these issues.

The question is: when is it an accommodation for an employee and when is it appropriate for the employee to apply for VR services? If the staff person becomes a consumer, should they be served by another team in their office if available, another team in another city, can they use work time for appointments? These are all the issues Dennis and Pat will be working on. In the last 3-4 years we have had 13 staff that were clients.

As an employer we must first consider the request as a reasonable accommodation because we have an obligation to provide reasonable accommodations.

King and Pat will review the 13 consumers who are/were staff to see if what we provided should have been provided as a reasonable accommodation.

It was suggested that if an employee applies for services a Program Director be assigned to the case and provide the services instead of another team. We'll need to create a team at State Office and a budget to in order to provide the services. We're going to look into doing this.

As a matter of policy we will lock cases of VR staff that are consumers.

12. CSP

Jack and King

Issues have come up with consumers who have been receiving job coaching services through CSP and VR has initiated an SE Plan and decide to change CSP providers. The question is if the consumer changes providers how do we decide what milestone payment to start with for the new CSP provider? If the only payment for initiate services has been paid and no job found and the consumer changes to a different CSP provider we most likely would start with the initiate services milestone. If the consumer is on the job and changes CSP providers it may be appropriate to just

pick up the milestone payments where the other one left off, however, it could be in the middle of a payment period when they change. It's going to be a judgment call by staff after consulting with their OD. Jack and King request that when issues with consumers and their CSP providers arise to share this information with. This way they can keep track of the problems/issues that arise with this program.

13. Checklists

Mark

Mark shared a video where the author of the Checklist Manifesto was on the Stephen Colbert show talking about the philosophy behind developing checklists to accomplish our work. We discussed the vision that we have for developing checklists for our processes and what needs to be considered when developing checklists.

Because of time constraints we will look at breaking into smaller groups to begin the development of checklists and scheduling other meeting times for these groups to work. These groups will need to include field staff, as they will be the ones implementing the checklists.

14. IPE booklet

Mark

The IPE booklet really addresses two points: are you ready and are you committed? Many of the things in the booklet could be developed into checklists. We will be making some changes to how the booklet is structured and implemented. However, staff is to continue using the booklet as it now stands.

15. Personal IT

Mark

We have been working with the CIO's office on a policy regarding allowing employees to use their personal IT (Smartphone) to check their email and/or calendar. Within the policy is a form for staff to fill out and get approved in order to use their Smartphone to access state email and/or calendar. Currently the policy is in draft form but we are going to fill out one of the forms to see if we can get the use of a staff member's personal Smartphone approved.

ARRA Funded Projects (Information related to Agenda Item #1)

Expanded Services to Individuals with Mental Illness:

Expanded services to unserved and underserved populations through supported employment services to individuals with mental illness.

- Goodwill Industries
- Cirrus House
- Community Alliance
- Mental Health Center
- Liberty Center

Expanded Services to Individuals with ABI:

Supported employment services for persons with ABI: Assessment, job placement, skills training, extended supports, expand the scope and delivery of supported employment services.

- Employment Works
- Career Solutions, Ollie Webb Center
- Goodwill Industries

Transportation System for Omaha Tribe of NE:

Develop a transportation system to allow tribal members, including person with disabilities, to access jobs and services in South Sioux City area.

Omaha Tribe of NE

Project SEARCH:

Project SEARCH is a program to teach vocational and competitive skills that students with disabilities can use in a work environment. These skills help them step into the working world and be a little more independent. Students work on transferable job skills with a job coach focusing on things such as how to get along with co-workers, being on time for your job, and proper grooming for the workplace. Project SEARCH is a partnership between Nebraska Voc Rehab, the business, the school system in that city, the Commission for the Blind and Visually Impaired, Assistive Technology Partnership and DD Services.

St Francis Medical Center
Good Samaritan Hospital
Faith Regional Medical Center
Wal-Mart Distribution Center
St Elizabeth Medical Center

Expanded Services to Individuals with Autism:

Develop supported employment services to individuals with autism, including focused training on autism to VR staff and businesses

Training Programs:

Associated Builders & Contractors – Forklift operator
Southeast Community College – Food preparation training

Self-Employment Opportunities:

Provide assistance to individuals with disabilities in becoming self-sufficient by exploring self-employment opportunities including feasibility studies, business planning, and monitoring services.

Abilities Fund

GED Instruction:

Provide GED instruction for individuals in the juvenile justice program

Job Coaching & Supported Employment:

Apogee